

Message Text

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62

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SUBJ: BOURGUIBA MESSAGES TO PRESIDENT FRANJIYAH
AND YASSER ARAFAT ON MAALOT AND ISRAELI REPRISAL

1. LOCAL PRESS MAY 18 PUBLISHED MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA TO SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH, PRESIDENT OF LEBANON. CONVEYING HIS "GREAT EMOTION" ON LEARNING OF ISRAELI RAIDS ON PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS AND LEBANESE VILLAGES. HE SAID THIS NEW AGGRESSION AGAINST UNARMED CIVILIANS, AS WELL AS "TRAGEDY OF MAALOT FOR WHICH ISRAEL ALONE BEARS ENTIRE RESPONSIBILITY, CONFIRMS NECESSITY OF URGENT SETTLEMENT OF MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM ON BASIS WHICH PERMITS PALESTINIANS RECOVER THEIR RIGHTS." HE EXPRESSED TUNISNA'S STRONG INDIGNATION AT ISRAELI AGGRESSION AND SOLIDARITY AND TOTAL SUPPORT FOR ALL LEBANESE DECISIONS FOR REPELLING ZIONIST AGGRESSOR.

2. IN SIMILAR MESSAGE TO PLO PRESIDENT YASSER ARAFAT BOURGUIBA SAID ISRAELI RAIDS DEMONSTRATE CONFUSION WHICH IS BEGINNING APPEAR IN ISRAELI RANKS AND HOUR OF VICTORY
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IS NEAR. HE AFFIRMED TUNISIA'S TOTAL SUPPORT FOR

PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT UNTIL FINAL VICTORY. BOURGUIBA
MADE NO MENTION OF MAALOT IN MESSAGE TO ARAFAT.

3. TUNISIAN FONMIN HABIB CHATTI IN PRESS STATEMENT
MAY 18 ON DEPARTURE FOR ARAB COUNCIL OF FOREIGN AND
DEFENSE MINISTERS MEETING IN CAIRO REPORTEDLY SAID
ISRAELI BEHAVIOR IN MAALOT OPERATION AND AGGRESSIONS
AGAINST PALESTINAIANS AND LEBANESE SHOW "ARROGANCE" OF
ZIONIST STATE HAS NO LIMITS. HE CALLED FOR ARAB STATES
TO PRESERVE UNITY, ANALYZE SITUATION DEEPLY WITH PRUDENCE
AND FAR-SIGHTEDNESS TO RECUPERATE ARAB RIGHTS AND RECOVER
PALESTINIAN LAND.

4. COMMENT: ON EVE OF ARAB COUNCIL MEETING BOURGUIBA
PROBABLY FELT IT NECESSARY TO REITERATE TUNISIA'S STRONG
SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN CAUSE AND REMAIN IN MAINSTREAM
OF ARAB WORLD ON THIS QUESTION. MESSAGES DO NOT REPRE-
SENT DEPARTURE FROM PAST POSITIONS TAKEN BY BOURGUIBA
ON PALESTINIAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE. CHATTI DEPARTURE
STATEMENT MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN DESIGNED PRESERVE HIS
CREDENTIALS WITH PLO.

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